

***UNIFIED DATA PACKET FOR ENCAPSULATING DATA PACKETS  
HAVING DIVERSE FORMATS***

***Abstract of the Disclosure***

Embodiments of the present invention described and shown in the specification  
5 and drawings facilitate the transportation of data packets having diverse formats through a  
general packet switching system. Due to the diverse formats of the data packets used by  
various common communications protocols, it is has been difficult to produce general  
packet switching systems that are able to switch multiple protocols. Embodiments of the  
present invention provide a Unified Data Packet for encapsulating data packets having  
10 diverse formats. Through encapsulation, embodiments of the present invention improve  
switching system efficiency by providing a single data packet format for handling by the  
switching system while enabling data packets in diverse formats to pass through the  
switch.

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